

CDVA Disability Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 18, 2008 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM
HQ Executive Conference Room Videoconference Meeting
Attendees: Diane Domino, Debra Lehr, Jo Page, Eileen Fuller, Jeremy
Nasca, Sue Rose-Wilson

I. UPDATES-

- a) National Disability Employment Awareness Month – October
 - Discussion regarding showing of movie, “Music Within,” at HQ, the Homes and DOs; feedback from staff all positive; DOs have yet to view movie, but plan to do so; a copy of the movie was shared with Food and Ag and other agencies have requested it; not yet known if Homes have viewed movie and/or how it has been received by Homes’ staff.
- b) Food Drive 2007
 - The committee voted once again to donate the remainder of the monies collected for last year’s Food Drive to the Food Drive for 2008 – total amount: \$262.68 (monies donated today to Food Drive Coordinator, Angela Willett).

II. ADA PROJECT-

- Sue sent an email today to all DAC members’ supervisors, Home Administrators and Secretariat, which explained ADA project in brief -to bring agency into compliance with ADA- and requested support for effort by way of allowing staff time to attend meetings and work on projects for additional 0-4 hrs per month, as needed.
- Why is this project important? It shows a good faith effort on the part of the agency to comply with the law and serves to reduce our liability in cases of complaints; it will help to build morale within our disabled workforce by letting them know they have a voice; it should reduce the number of complaints from Home residents and send a message that we are responsive to their concerns (for example, there have been a multitude of ADA-related complaints received from Home residents, such as sidewalks in need of repair, etc.).
- The ADA requires 4 specific measures to be taken by government agencies:

1) appoint an ADA Coordinator and post information for easy access by all staff – EEO Officer is and has always been ADA Coordinator for HQ; Coordinators have been and will be appointed at all Homes; this information will be made accessible on our Internet/Intranet sites and posted in visible areas within facilities;

2) have written complaint procedures in place and within easy access for all staff; this information will also be accessible on our Internet/Intranet sites and posted in visible areas within facilities;

3) conduct an agency self-evaluation to determine areas in need of compliance- this was required by law by 1993, has not been done at CDVA;

4) establish a transition plan for compliance.

- The DAC will play a role in the self-evaluation, but not in the transition plan; the committee will conduct the self-evaluation, ascertain areas in need of improvement, then make recommendations from that list to the Administration; those recommendations should be cost-effective and economically feasible.

- Areas where modifications/improvements can be made: internet and building accessibility, program, policy and process modification, forms accessibility; e.g., signage indicating where HQ disabled access restrooms are located, process to provide forms in Braille if requested, handicapped parking for visitors, etc.; important to have language added to all agency forms that reads something like, “If you need assistance in completing this form, please call _____ for appointment.”

- need to look at what other agencies are doing with regard to procurement of forms and assistive devices for customers/applicants

- it was suggested that we invite Richard Wyatt in the Construction Division and Jeanette Pellicano in the Procurement and Contracting Division to our Dec. mtg to advise on building modifications and processes for procurement; Sue agreed to extend invite

- DAC should ID programs in need of modification for accessibility; none could be ID’ed since agency doesn’t have

programs for public like other agencies; suggestion made to look at Homes for programs

- it was suggested that DAC could query disabled employees and veterans organizations for input on accessibility, pending approval by Secretary, via electronic and hard copy surveys (in lobby areas) and/or outreach via veterans newsletters; Sue to follow up with Secretary
- Sue said January would be a good target date to start on these projects